

during those three perilous days. It may well be that the common fear of death, when they rode side by side through the fierce crowds that lined the streets, the plans for common safety that they formed in the Tower while the mob outside shouted for blood, had bound Richard to Walworth and Brembre by closer ties than those of political interest. The leaders of the victualling trades were essentially King's men.

Their greatest rivals were the clothing trades, and the head of these was John of Northampton, draper. In November 1381, this man was elected Mayor in the room of Walworth. As his enemies relied on the King, so he relied on the Duke. Yet, unpopular as his patron was in London, Northampton himself played chiefly for popular support. He had not long held office before he began a policy of aggression directed against the victualling interest. As the Fishmongers' Guild used their privileges to raise the price of fish in the city to an exorbitant figure, the new Mayor issued ordinances calculated to put a stop to such dealings. The price of fish went down, and there was general rejoicing. When the Mayor passed through the streets, he was received with signs of popular good-will. But if he had ventured to show his face in Billingsgate, he would have been greeted in suitable language, for he had ruined the fishmongers.<sup>1</sup> Following up this blow, he passed a decree forbidding victuallers of all sorts to hold office in the city. By this means his chief opponents were excluded from all share in the government, and the great trades they represented were practically disfranchised. Not contented with this, the Mayor and his friends attacked John Philpot, a friend of Walworth and of the King. In spite of his great services to the city and realm, his munificence in fitting out fleets for the defence of English trade, and his long-established position, he was forced to resign the office of alderman. Having turned all his enemies off the governing body, John of Northampton governed London through a clique drawn chiefly from the clothing trades.<sup>2</sup>

Though his rule was an oligarchy, his sympathies were

<sup>1</sup> C. 22. -B., 507, Bex. 39 (trial of Northampton); Wals., ii. 65-6 <sup>2</sup> C. U. E., 507, Bex. 39; Wals. U. 71.